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BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

BYLAWS

Adopted by the Board on May 25, 1948, revised July 21, 1953,  
revised July 21, 1959, revised October 15, 1963

Article I - Name and Object

Sec. 1 The name of the organization is the "Board on Geographic Names," as prescribed in the Act of July 25, 1947 (61 Stat. 456; 43 USCA Sec. 364), "An Act to provide a central authority for standardizing geographic names for the purpose of eliminating duplication in standardizing such names among the Federal Departments, and for other purposes."

Sec. 2 The object of the Board, which functions conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter called the Secretary), as provided in the Act of July 25, 1947, is to "provide for uniformity in geographic nomenclature and orthography throughout the Federal Government."

Article II - Members

Sec. 1 The membership of the Board shall conform to the provisions of Section 2 of the Act. At the time of the adoption of the third revision of these bylaws the membership comprises one representative each from the following constituent departments and independent agencies:

Department of State  
Department of the Army  
Department of the Navy  
Post Office Department  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Government Printing Office  
Library of Congress  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Department of the Air Force  
Department of Defense

Sec. 2 To insure full representation at all meetings of the Board and its committees, the head of any department or independent agency represented on the Board may designate a

deputy member who will serve and vote as the representative of that department or independent agency in the absence of the regular representative. The word "member" as used in these bylaws shall be held to refer to any deputy representing a department or agency in the absence of the regular member. A deputy member may attend and participate in meetings of the Board or of the committees, other than the Executive Committee, on which his department or independent agency is represented, except that he may not vote if the regular member from his department or agency is present. A member or deputy from a given agency may not second a motion made by the other.

Sec. 3 A department or independent agency which is represented on the Board may, in the absence or unavailability of both its member and deputy, provide for the attendance of an observer at a meeting of the Board or of a committee except the Executive Committee. On specific request of the agency concerned the Board or committee may give such observer the status of a deputy for that meeting only.

Sec. 4 Only Board members are eligible for election as officers of the Board and its standing committees.

Sec. 5 Each member and each deputy shall be appointed for a two-year term, and may be reappointed to successive terms as provided by law. Each term of office shall expire on September 30 of the odd-numbered year, and the terms of members and deputies shall run concurrently. Appointment to a vacancy shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Sec. 6 Each member shall keep the DNC or FNC informed concerning the current and anticipated programs of his department or independent agency that have a bearing on geographic names. He shall also inform the pertinent committees as far in advance as possible concerning the specific geographic name needs of his department or agency.

Article III - Officers

Sec. 1 The officers of the Board shall be a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, an Executive Secretary for Foreign Names, and an

Executive Secretary for Domestic Names. The Chairman shall be nominated by the Board and appointed by the Secretary in accordance with statutory requirements, and the Vice Chairman shall be elected by the Board. They shall be chosen by secret ballot at the regular meeting of the Board in October of each odd-numbered year, and shall serve for two years or until their successors are chosen and enter upon duty. The Director of the Office of Geography shall serve, ex officio, as the Executive Secretary for Foreign Names. The Executive Secretary for Domestic Names shall be appointed by the Director, Geological Survey.

Sec. 2 The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Board. He shall perform the usual duties of a Chairman, and other duties that may be assigned to him by the Board. Except for the advisory committees provided for in the Act, he shall appoint the members of all committees not specifically elected by the Board. He shall be ex officio a member, without vote, of all committees of which he is not a regular member.

Sec. 3 The Vice Chairman shall act as chairman in the absence of that officer. He shall be Chairman of the Executive Committee, and shall present reports thereof at meetings of the Board. He may attend ex officio, without vote, meetings of any committee of which he is not a member. He may not be chairman of any standing committee other than the Executive Committee.

Sec. 4 The Executive Secretary to the Board shall be either the Executive Secretary for Foreign Names or the Executive Secretary for Domestic Names. He shall be appointed by the Chairman.

Sec. 5 The Executive Secretary to the Board will prepare the minutes and reports of the Board. Reports of Board and committee chairmen will be made available to the Executive Secretary to the Board for reproduction in sufficient quantities for all Board members and for other requirements. He will maintain records and conduct correspondence of the Board, exclusive of correspondence pertaining directly to foreign or domestic names, in accordance with procedures formulated by the Board and approved by the Secretary. He will provide a meeting

place for the Board and advise members of the time and place of meetings. He may participate, without vote, in all meetings of the Board and the meetings of the Executive Committee.

Sec. 6 The Executive Secretary for Foreign Names will maintain all records of the Board, including the correspondence files that pertain to foreign names which would exclude the contiguous United States - Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. He will provide a meeting place for the Committee and advise the members as to the time and place of the meeting. He will prepare the minutes of the meetings of the Foreign Names Committee, and conduct related correspondence of the Board and the Committee in accordance with procedures formulated by the Board and approved by the Secretary. He will serve as technical consultant to the Board in matters pertaining to foreign names. He may participate, without vote, in all meetings of the Board and the Executive Committee and he or his representative will be present at all meetings of the Foreign Names Committee at which name decisions are made.

Sec. 7 The Executive Secretary for Domestic Names will maintain all records of the Board including the correspondence files that pertain to domestic geographic names in the contiguous United States - Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. He will provide a meeting place for the Committee and advise the members as to the time and place of the meeting. He will prepare the minutes of the meetings of the Domestic Names Committee, and conduct related correspondence of the Board and the Committee in accordance with procedures formulated by the Board and approved by the Secretary. He will serve as technical consultant to the Board in matters pertaining to domestic names. He may participate, without vote, in all meetings of the Board and the Executive Committee and he or his representative will be present at all meetings of the Domestic Names Committee at which name decisions are made.

Article IV - Committees

Sec. 1 There shall be the following standing committees: (1) The Executive Committee; (2) the Domestic Names Committee; (3) the Foreign Names Committee; and (4) the Publications Committee. Additional standing committees may be established or discharged by the Board. There shall be at least three members on each standing committee.

Sec. 2 The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Board and the Chairman or in their absence the Vice Chairman, of the Domestic Names Committee, the Foreign Names Committee, and the Publications Committee. The Executive Committee acting for the Board will elect members of special committees and will coordinate the work of all committees. It will maintain cognizance of the activities of the staffs particularly in relation to the official resolutions of the Board, and will make recommendations thereon. It will take action on routine matters within its competence, and by its unanimous vote may act for the Board on urgent matters normally referable to the Board.

Sec. 3 The Domestic Names Committee, the Foreign Names Committee, and the Publications Committee shall consist of the members representing the departments and agencies here named:

(a) The Domestic Names Committee:  
Post Office Department  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Government Printing Office

(b) The Foreign Names Committee:  
Department of State  
Department of the Army  
Department of the Navy  
Library of Congress  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Department of the Air Force  
Department of Defense

(c) The Publications Committee:  
Government Printing Office

and, in each instance, of such additional individual members as may be elected by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 4 The Domestic Names Committee will operate in accordance with principles, policies, and procedures approved by the Board and the Secretary. The Domestic Names Committee will utilize staff services provided by the Geological Survey, and render decisions on individual geographic

names and approve preferred sources clearly within established principles, policies, and procedures. All other committee action will be referred to the Board for approval. The committee will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board or the Executive Committee.

Sec. 5 The Foreign Names Committee will utilize the staff services provided by the Office of Geography and render decisions on individual geographic names and approve preferred sources clearly within established principles, policies, and procedures. All other committee action, will be referred to the Board for approval. The committee will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board or the Executive Committee.

Sec. 6 The Publications Committee will recommend general specifications for the content, form, and periodicity of all publications of the Board, for approval by the Board and the Secretary. Thereafter the Committee will act on behalf of the Board in connection with the issuance of all publications of the Board and will perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board or the Executive Committee.

Sec. 7 Ad Hoc Committees, with membership not necessarily restricted to Board members or deputies, may be created by the Board or the Executive Committee, or by one of the other standing committees with the approval of the Board or the Executive Committee. Such committees may be discharged by the body that created them.

Sec. 8 Advisory committees may be recommended for appointment by the Secretary. The standing committees may recommend to the Board the creation of advisory committees on specific problems.

Sec. 9 Each standing, special, or advisory committee shall elect its own officers, except as otherwise provided in the by-laws or by action of the Board.

Sec. 10 The actions of any committee are subject to review and approval by the Board.

Article V - Executive Secretaries

Sec. 1 The Executive Secretaries will keep the Board and its committees informed of the progress of projects and apprised of current or impending problems and issues, in relation to programs approved by the Board and the Secretary. They will coordinate the work programs of their staffs with the official actions of the Board and, so far as possible, will bring projects to completion in accordance with the recommendations of the Board.

Sec. 2 In the interim between meetings, Board matters regarded as urgent by the Chairman will be referred by him, through the Executive Secretary, to the appropriate officer or committee of the Board for necessary action.

Article VI - Meetings

Sec. 1 Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the third Tuesday of January, April, July, and October of each year, or at such time as the Board may determine. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or the Executive Committee.

Sec. 2 In any meeting of the Board, a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise specified, a majority vote of the members present is sufficient for any action.

Sec. 3 At any special meeting of the Board when the members receive notice less than two working days in advance, a vote by a majority of all members of the Board is required for any action.

Sec. 4 In the interim between meetings, urgent Board matters may be decided by two-thirds vote of all members of the Board by telephone or written vote on the initiative of the Chairman of the Board or his representative. Pertinent written material applicable to the urgent matter must be in the hands of the Board members before such action is taken. Such action shall be recorded in the minutes of the next Board meeting.

Sec. 5 Parliamentary procedures at meetings of the Board and its committees shall conform to Robert's Rules of Order, revised, unless otherwise provided.

Article VII - Principles, Policies, and Procedures

Sec. 1 Statements of principles and basic policies governing geographic nomenclature, to be followed by the Board, its committees and staffs, and by departments and agencies of the Government, shall be formulated by the Board and approved by the Secretary in accordance with statutory requirements. These statements may be revised or amplified as often as necessary.

Sec. 2 The Board, its committees and staffs shall in their working procedures implement the provisions of the Act of July 25, 1947 (61 Stat. 456; 43 USCA Sec. 364) (Sec. 3) that "the principles, policies, and procedures formulated hereunder shall be designed to serve the interests of the Federal Government and the general public, to enlist the effective cooperation of the Federal departments and agencies most concerned, and to give full consideration to the specific interest of particular Federal and State agencies."

Sec. 3 Specific procedures, supplemental to these bylaws, will be formulated from time to time, by committees of the Board, to cover the work of the Board and its committees. When approved by the Board and the Secretary, such procedures will be incorporated in a code.

Article VIII - Communications

Sec. 1 Formal actions or resolutions of the Board that require validation by the Secretary will be submitted to him in writing by the Chairman of the Board or other designated officer.

Sec. 2 Communications to and from the Board will be conducted in accordance with procedures formulated by the Board and approved by the Secretary

Article IX - Amendments

Sec. 1 Amendments to these bylaws proposed by one of the standing committees or by any three members of the Board, or by the Chairman, shall be considered by the Executive Committee and reported to the Board.

Sec. 2      Amendments to these bylaws may be adopted in any duly called meeting of the Board by a two-thirds vote of the members present notice of such proposed amendments having been communicated to the members of the Board thirty days in advance of the meeting, and shall take effect upon approval by the Secretary.

Approved in third revision: November 6, 1963

/s/ Stewart L. Udall  
Secretary of the Interior